

Lone Gunchick3: Fly Away

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SUMMARY: Silver and the Gunmen travel to Portland, Oregon to search out Susanne Modeski/Holly Fizergald

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AUTHOR'S

NOTE: This is the one chapter I wanted to write the most when I stared out to write this series. Plus I know a lot about my own hometown, Portland, to write about it. This is the most sap I've ever written. Plus it took me forever, several bouts of writer's block, and two all nighters to finish this. Enjoy!

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Chapter Three

>Fly Away

>
 "Byers? Byers? I've got a surprise for you!" Silver screamed out of the blue during critical code work.

> "If it concerns code errors, then don't bug me." Byers muttered.
 "You know you have to admit it sometime, By-bee.

Whoever gave you that ring is the love of your life and very much concerns you."

> "Oh shit, duck for cover, Langly. He's gonna come running over any

minute soon." Cracked Frohike.
 "Huh? Susanne? My Susanne?" Byers said in a questioning lost puppy tone.

> "I would go with A: Susanne Modeski, otherwise known as Holly Fizergald. And yes, that's my final answer." Replied Langly, ducking under a desk as Byers got up from his chair.
 "What is it? You found out where she is?" Byers got up and started to run, not walk, towards Silver and her golden computer screen.

> "Like, duh. She's currently residing in Portland, Oregon. The city of roses. My hometown. Coincidence is: It's the yearly visit to my family for mother's day, Working will be recording our first album, and now we are all heading out tomorrow to lush green Oregon to search for Byers' lovely lady."
 "Um, like, no! We have major coding going on this month and we're not going to drop everything just to go to Portland so Byers could woo his danger grrl." Frohike piped up, appearing from under a desk.

> "I just booked nice first class tickets for almost the entire first class so you three, the band, me, and our band manager could go. If you should step out, I'll take the ticket out of your secret stash."
 "Why don't we vote on this? Majority rules, man." Langly replied, settling back in his chair.

> "Ok. All for going to Portland raise their hand and say their kung fu is the best." Byers, Silver, and Langly raised their hands. Frohike's head snapped over at Langly.
 "You?! You've gotta be kidding." Frohike scoffed.

> "Hey, I'm all for the jet plane to greener than green Oregon. We haven't traveled anywhere since Vegas. And that was freaky beyond major." Langly defended his vote.
 "So sorryâ€|â€| Now go pack some computer worthy goods so you could do your precious code work." Silver cooed.

> "Oh you should have said that before I embarrassed myself." Frohike muttered under his breath as he walked off to pack up some computer equipment. He glanced over at Byers, who was grinning ear to ear at the wedding band Susanne gave him in Vegas.

> The morning came like a slap in the face. They had to wake up bright and early at 5:30AM to make the 7:38AM flight. Obviously, Frohike and Langly were biting each other's head off more than usual. Everybody was groggy and upset from the last minute notice trip across the country.

> "Everybody got everything? Laptops, clothes, toiletries, condoms incase Byers gets lucky?" Silver asked, halfway out the door.
 "Could you say that louder? I don't think the White House heard that." Byers said sarcastically, luggage hanging off his arms and shoulders.

> "Can we get moving? I'd like to settle into the posh first class seats before those coach class passengers walk by and get their poor dust on the leather." Frohike said, pushing Silver out the door.
 "Ok, fine. Whatever you say Donald Trump, sir." Silver snapped at Frohike as she moved out of the doorway and headed out to the van.

> "I can cut this sarcastic crap a mile deep." Langly mumbled as he followed after Silver.
 "Ah, ah, ah, ah. Wait until we get on the plane. Then we can melt it like buttah." Silver grinned as she opened the door to the van.

>
 The trip to Dulles was quieter than the trip out the door. Silver was checking up on flight stats and feeding them to Frohike as he drove. The plan was to meet up with the rest of the first class party, the male members of Working and their manager at the waiting point for American Airlines. Proceed to get tickets, coffee, and wait at the gate. Badda bing, badda boom, first class to Dallas! Then connecting flight from Dallas to Portland, more first class. Ultimate

comfort.

>
 The traffic was pure peace for some odd reason. Frohike didn't want to leave the van parked at the airport. Silver told him to suck it up, or have Mulder pick it up there at the airport. Frohike rolled his eyes; Mulder wouldn't come close to touching the "van" anytime soon. Frohike sucked it up and left it in the long-term parking. Nobody would even think at all to steal that van.

> "Good man." Silver smiled as she gave Frohike a hearty pat on the back. Frohike scoffed and struggled to catch up as Silver was fleeing to the ticket counter, to get a good spot in the growing line. Langly was struggling to keep up too, but Byers was quick as a jackrabbit. A little too excited to finally see Susanne, excuse me, HOLLY, again. And yet, Silver dragged the entire brigade with her for no reason.

> Silver banged her guitar case against her leg impatiently. Over the hustling and bustling of the airport, she strained to hear familiar voices shouting out.
 "Silver! Langly dude!" Silver's bandmates shouted out over all the impatient and jet lagged people. Silver turned around to see John, Michael, James, and their manager, Seth McGrath, dodging people with their luggage hanging off their arms, and dark bags packed under their eyes like everybody else in the airport.

> "Why did you have to book the earliest flight of the day, and only to tell us at the last minute?" Seth asked, gasping for breath. The sounds of luggage thumping on the worn carpet distracted the other people in line clamoring that the band and manager cut in line.
 "Dude's right. I'm asking the same Q." Langly shot out.

> "Keeps you on your toes and makes you on time for your flight. I've learned that the hard and expensive way." Silver shot back. She shot the guys the look as she picked up her luggage and headed for the check in counter.

> Several minutes later, Silver and the seven other guys arrived at their gate, with a lot of time to burn. Silver plopped in a chair and put her guitar case and carry on bag on the seat next to her. The guys were busy introducing themselves to each other and complaining over the flight times. Silver looked quietly out the large floor to ceiling windows at the planes taking off and arriving, little luggage carts driving around
 "A cappella." Silver said in her bandmates direction, still staring out the window, unmoving. They turned and looked at her with puzzled looks on their faces.

> "Of what?" John asked, staring at the back of Silver's dark blond short bob.
 "Leaving on a Jet Plane."

> "Explains it, the airport stuff. We're setting a mood or something?"
 "We're Working, we do things that other bands don't dare to do in a million years. It's the perfect song for this airport bickering crap." Silver still continued to stare out the window. John turned around to face James and Michael.

> "It'd be fun, it won't kill us. Plus we will get more attention anyway." James shrugged.
 "Now that's final, John, you'll open and the rest of us will join in." Silver got up from her chair and joined the band. With her directions, John stared to sing the opening to 'Leaving on a Jet Plane' while Silver, James, and Michael joined in a little bit after:

>
All my bags are packed

>I'm ready to go
I'm standing here outside your door

>I hate to wake you up to say goodbye
But the dawn is breakin'

>It's early morn
The taxi's waitin'

>He's blowin' his horn
Already I'm so lonesome I could cry

>So kiss me and smile for me
Tell me that you'll wait for me

>Hold me like you'll never let me go
I'm leavin' on a jet plane

>I don't know when I'll be back again
Oh, babe, I hate to go

>There's so many times
I've let you down

>So many times I've played around
I tell you now, they don't mean a thing

>Ev'ry place I go
I'll think of you

>Ev'ry song I sing
I'll sing for you

>When I come back
I'll wear your wedding ring

>So kiss me and smile for me
Tell me that you'll wait for me

>Hold me like you'll never let me go
I'm leavin' on a jet plane

>I don't know when
 I'll be back again

>Oh, babe, I hate to go
Now the time has come to leave you

>One more time
Let me kiss you

>Then close your eyes
I'll be on my way

>Dream about the days to come
When I won't have to leave alone

>About the times
I won't have to say

>So kiss me and smile for me
Tell me that you'll wait for me

>Hold me like you'll never let me go
I'm leavin' on a jet plane

>I don't know when
I'll be back again

>Oh, babe, I hate to go

> When they finished the last note to the song, the large group of people who had gathered around them applauded. Working bowed to the crowd.
 "I told you soâ€|â€|." Silver nagged to John before heading back to her seat.

> "Stellar." Langly said as Silver sat down.
 "Thanks. So did you three meet the rest of the guys?"

> "Yeah. But why had Langly met the band and not us?" Byers complained.
 "Cause YOU two sent him out to turn off MY kick ass guitar playing. So I took HIM out to lunch and to see the band's comeback rehearsal because YOU were complaining about MY music!"

> "Whoo, lay off the exaggerating talk. They get the idea." Langly laughed.
 "First call for first class, seating now." The annoying flight speaker voice boomed.

> "That's us. Let's get this plane in the air!" Byers yelled as he jumped up from his chair and ran to the gate.
 "Calm. Down." Silver said slowly.

> "Yeah, take some Ritalin or somethin' calm the sugar rush." Langly added.

> Upon getting comfortable in posh leather seats, the coach class passengers stared to file through the aisles. Silver sat next to Byers, who had the window seat. In front of them, Frohike had window and Langly had aisle. The rest of Working sat on the right side of the aisle, laughing and joking like old drinking buddies. Silver was glancing at the coach passengers out of the corner of her eye as they went by. But only one person got her attention, an old friend from college, Drew Maddox and his teenage son, Kyle. Drew slipped his hand into Silver's, secretly giving her a small scrap of paper. He kept moving with the pace of the coach passengers, disappearing into rows of cramped seats.
 "What was that all about?" Byers asked, peering behind Silver.

> "Why do you need to know? I don't even know either." Silver said, as she pushed Byers back into his seat.
 "Ok, fine. Be hostile."

> "But it's a long story into my past. When I'm talking long, I mean LONG."
 "Some storytime would be good on this long flight."
> "Alright, but you have to listen, and listen good. I will not be telling this story again, because it hurts."
 "Is it ok if we listen in too? We've already told you our pasts." Frohike piped up from the seats in front of Silver.

> "Yeah, sure. Your stories for my stories. Fair is fair."

> Silver waited until the plane was stabilized in the air before beginning the story of her past. It started off when she was a mere sophomore in high school way back in 1986, Portland, OR. It was a warm March day; school had just gotten out for spring break. The UCLA senior next door, Jake Dahmus had come home for a visit and was over at the Silver house for a BBQ.
 "The thing that makes a good day go wrongâ€¦. Jake had raped me. He had followed me upstairs to my room. He threatened me if I ever told, his parents, who were high ranking attorneys, would have my family and I removed from our home and lives," Silver whispered. Frohike and Langly were silent, but Byers had held her hand, silently comforting her. "So I never told anybody, scared for my family and life. Fast forward to December. I gave birth to twins, Johnny and Erin. I had to tell my story when I started to show in the months I was pregnant. My parents couldn't do anything because the police department didn't believe us because my parents were hippies who always cried wolf. But everybody was supporting through the rest of my high school years. I had gotten a Psychology scholarship to Georgetown University, and that's how I started off in DC. But Georgetown had stuck me in a different type of dorm since I had 2-year-old twins. I had met Drew, that guy back there who handed me the note, who had a two-year-old son of his own. We became good friends, taking care of each other's kids. Georgetown was the best thing I did. But after I graduated and returned home, Jake had slapped me with a custody lawsuit. He took away my kids and granted me no custody, at all. It was unfair. I moved to DC, and met the guys of Working, who had supported me ever since. Every year now, I go back home to Portland on Mother's Day to visit my kids and family."

> "Why haven't you tried to fight back for custody of your children?" Byers asked.
 "I don't know. Each year I have a chance to, but I don't take it. Probably I'm scared of getting slammed in court or my kids will hate me. Pretty stupid, huh?"

> "No, not really. That evil dude struck a bad chord in your Zen." Langly said in a reassuring tone.
 "Thanks. I was thinking of fighting back next summer. I don't want to pull my kids out into a heated custody battle while they're still in middle school. I'm going to wait until they graduate 8th grade next year and get support from everyone I know."

> "Logical." Frohike approved.
 "Now that I've told you the story, let's plot off some key points for the week. We can't approach Susanne right away, we have to ease into it, observe her. And when the time is right, accidental running into. Making up lost time, mmwah, mmwah."

> "What?! I have to wait and suffer through observing Susanne and do nothing about it?!" Byers panicked.
 "Tell me if this is the best way to do this. You would automatically get off the plane, find Susanne, and tell her that you came all the way to Portland to find her. That will scare her off."

> "That's true. Let's do it your way then."
 "Bold choice. First things first. We'll be staying at the Heathman Hotel downtown. I booked two of those two bedroom suites, one of the estrogen band over there, and one for us. Each day we will have to wander off looking

different, to make sure Susanne doesn't realize we're following her. But that's only in the afternoons. The mornings, I have to go record songs for Working's debut album. You guys can do whatever you want to do, but never try to contact Susanne. At the end of the week, I'll have planned a secret meeting in a public place between Byers and Susanne. Can you get through this, Byers?"

> "He'll get through it with large amounts of painkillers and bedrest." Frohike joked.
 "Yeah, man, ha-ha." Langly laughed. Silver laughed also, and took out her laptop. Byers quietly watched Silver set up her laptop. He turned away and looked out the window; a blanket of white fluffy clouds and a bright blue sky was the usual view. He reminisced the trip to Las Vegas. He put his head back against the back of the wide seat and slowly drifted off to sleep.

> Dreams came quickly, a bright flash of light. Byers got out of his car and walked up to a cozy white picket fenced house. He got the mail out of the mailbox and walked up the flower-lined pathway to the open door. His two daughters ran up to him and hugged him. They followed him through the house and outside. It was a nice bright day, the birds singing, warm sunlight against his skin. His wife, Susanne, turned around and walked towards him. He embraced her and gave her a loving kiss. But then, everything faded away, and Byers was left standing on a busy Portland street staring at the people walking by on the sidewalk. He could hear several faint voices, those of Langly, Frohike, and Silver's talking indecently. He turned around and saw a glistening silver Lexus heading at him at speeds only allowed at racetracks. He couldn't move at all, and yet the car kept coming towards him. He closed his eyes and waited for the impact.
 "Byers! Wake up! We'll be landing soon in Dallas/Ft. Worth!" Silver said as she shook Byers awake.

> "Oh my god. I just had that same dream from when I was in Las Vegas." Byers gasped.
 "The one with the nice and cozy, lah de dah house and you make out with your wife in the backyard, then you get booted to the desert?" Langly suggested, shuffling through bags in the overhead compartment.

> "Yeah, but different ending."
 "You ok then?" Silver comforted.

> "I hope what happened after I kissed Susanne didn't happen."
 "You mean you hope you didn't think that she said that she's having an affair with the pool boy?"

> "No. I got hit by a car."
 "Ok I need the make, model, plates, and driver. Plus any details you know."

> "It's just a dream."
 "Sureâ€|â€|â€| and you said that about the out in the desert with a wedding band. And you were standing out on a Vegas street holding a wedding band. What's the difference?"

> "Yeah you're right. It seemed like a '00 Lexus LS, with Millennium Silver Metallic paint with black leather interior trim. Oregon license plates personalized. It said, PDX DA. The driver was a rich strapping man, blond, muscular face. He was cleaning his face of lipstick. He's married and having an affair. Is that enough detail for you?" Byers turned to Silver, who was just sitting motionless with her mouth hanging open. He pen dropped to the floor.
 "Can you write that down? I can't believe you can remember all that from just one dream."

> "I've been watching Zero Effect too much, been looking through the Lexus website, and I have a good memory."
 "Whatever. Just write that down, you'll never know when you might need it."

> "Call the Psychic Friends Network, we got ourselves a real psychic dreamer!" Frohike joked.
 "Make sure Byers doesn't try to kill himself again, with all that assisted suicide in Oregon." Langly

suggested.

> "Byers, don't kill yourself." Silver said like a true parent.

> Several minutes later, the plane touched down in DallasFt. Worth. Everybody waited around the airport before boarding the second plane to Portland. Byers had the same dream again. But he tried to keep his eyes open upon the hit, but Silver woke him up again.

> "Why can't you let me sleep and try to figure out the meaning of this damn dream?" Byers snapped at Silver.
 "Um, I didn't wake you up. I think my voice is set in your dream to wake you up so you can't see the consequences of that shiny Lexus grille." Silver suggested, innocently.

> "Weird."
 "Weird, that is. I've been researching for the past hour or so. It seems that your Susanne, Holly Fitzgerald, had taken off to Portland as you saw her last in a taxi in Vegas heading to the airport. She went back to her old profession, organic chemistry, but this time in the Department of Behavioral Neuroscience at OHSU. If you don't know, OHSU is Oregon Heath Science University. How she got that job, I have no idea. She currently resides in the Rose Friend Apartments. Very beautiful vintage apartments, hitting close to OHSU itself. You're not going to be going there anytime soon, so don't think about it. I'd just like to let you know and all."

> "Why does this flight have to be so damn long?" Langly griped.
 "Because we're traveling across the entire country! It's SUPPOSED to be long!" Frohike shot back at Langly.

> "Guys, guys, guys. Shut up and stop drawing attention. You guys can be so childish. If I even hear the phrase, 'let's cha-cha blondie' I will get all kung fu on your asses." Silver leaned over and whispered to Frohike and Langly.
 "Ok, ok. We get the idea. Are we there yet?" Langly asked the impudent impatient child question.

> Silver didn't answer his question, because they would get there sooner or later, than to just know how long and make it seem longer. They were all traveling to Portland on Epic Records' dime. Devoting so much time to Working's album, it's hard enough that Silver could actually pry herself away and spend time with the Gunmen, searching, finding, observing 'Mata Hari,' as Frohike calls her. How can one woman cause a large mess between Byers and the people close to him? This Modeski chick is brilliant, but even brilliant people have a weak spot. And her weak spot is Byers. But Silver wouldn't plan something as evil as bringing Susanne down, it's not her nature. Her nature is to be the most efficient way to find someone.

> It was a beautiful day in Portland. Sun, in Portland? Impossible, but some days are just luckier than others. Silver had a huge group of people there to welcome her.
 "What are you two doing out of school on a Tuesday?" Silver asked her kids.

> "Early release. Grandma Autumn came and picked us up and brought us here. We didn't think you'd come this early in the week." replied Johnny, her son.
 "It was a free trip." Silver laughed, then introduced the Gunmen to her family, as co-workers. Silver's immediate family were there, her mother, father, younger sister, and twin teenagers.

> "Where's the getaway car?" Frohike asked.
 "Outside, where did you think?" said Kennedy, Silver's father.

> There was thirteen people in all, and every single one of them filed around the airport, going to the baggage claim, outside, and the parking lot. Silver's parents had two airport shuttle-like vans. Silver rode in one with the Gunmen, her mother, and her twins. Her father drove the other one with her sister, Eve, and Working. The drive to the Heathman was noisy with the sounds of idle chatter.

> "Last stop, gotta get off." Mrs. Silver said.
 "Thanks mom, I'll see you Sunday." Silver grinned as she hopped out of the van.

> "It was nice to meet you Mrs. Silver. The same to you, doublemint twins." Byers said politely like the gentleman he was.
 "No problem. I hope you find your Holly." Mrs. Silver smiled sweetly. The Gunmen and Working followed Silver into the posh artsy fartsy Heathman Hotel.

>
 "And this is your room." The bellhop said, holding the door open to the Gunmen and Silver's room.

> "Thank you." Silver said, ushering the Gunmen in. She snuck a \$20 tip into the bellhop's red uniform pocket. She patted the soft pocket, and grinned at him. Frohike looked back at Silver, her hand was still resting on the bellhop's front coat pocket. He walked back over and grabbed hold of Silver's free arm and gave it a small tug.
 "Stop flirting with the bellhop, he needs to do more luggage carrying in other parts of the hotel." Frohike sighed. Silver huffed and took her hand off the bellhop and let him go back to work. Silver dropped all her luggage to the middle of the living room and walked around the hotel room. The Gunmen stood around, waiting for Silver's directions.

> "Byers is in the far room. Frohike, you got the couch. Langly, you're in the other room with me. Any questions?" Silver said quickly as she came back into the living room and snapped her fingers. Frohike raised his hand.
 "Why am I on the couch?" Frohike whined.

> "TV access. I brought your tapes and all. Easy access to everything else."
 "Cool."

> "All right then, come with me Langly." Silver started walking again, and Langly stumbled after her.
 "Wait!" Langly shouted out at Silver, who was nearly close to the 2nd bedroom door.

> "What?" Silver stopped and turned around, letting Langly catch up.
 "Since we're sleeping in the same bed, does that mean we have to get married or something?"

> "No, you doofus. But you can carry me through the door if you'd like." Silver grinned at Langly and opened her arms to him. Langly laughed and dropped his luggage to the soft carpet. He walked towards her and tucked one arm under her knees, and the other under her arms. He lifted her up; her arm draped over his neck, walked towards the door and nudged it open with a sneakered toe. He walked through the room and placed her lightly on the bed. They looked at each other and laughed.
 "Is that fine?"

> "It's perfect. Now let's unpack, we have a busy week ahead of us."

> They all went to bed earlier than usual, jet lag and all. When the Gunmen woke up in the morning around 10AM with a knock at the door. Frohike grumbled as he plucked himself off the couch and answered the door. He opened the door and rubbed his eyes. It was the bellhop from yesterday.
 "What is it? What is so important that you had to wake me from my beauty sleep?" Frohike said sleepily.

> "Miss Silver wanted me to give you a wake-up call. And this note." The bellhop said, holding out a slip of paper in his crisp linen-gloved hands. Frohike took the note lazily.
 "Thank you."

> "No problem sir." The bellhop smiled and headed on his way. Frohike grumbled again and shut the door. He walked towards the bedrooms and banged on their doors.
 "Wake up you beauty queens! Silver arraigned a wake-up knock on the damn door with a note for us and I'm gonna make you suffer by waking up like I did!" Frohike yelled.

> "I'm up, I'm up!" Langly yelled then flung the door open. Byers just quietly opened the door, like he'd slept fully.
 "God dammit

Byers, why do you always look like you've had a good night's sleep every morning and we look like crap?" Frohike complained.

> "Cause I'm secretly a chick?" Byers suggested, with a hint of you-can-easily-guess-I'm-lying-tone in his voice.
 "Yeah, right." Langly said sarcastically.

> "So what does the note say?" Byers sighed. Frohike muttered and opened the note.
 "It's probably 9:30 or something now, but I'd like to say good morning and welcome to your first day of Portland. Sorry that sounds corny, but I'm tired as hell. I got up at 7 this morning and did all the work. And do I get thanks? No, Frohike just yells and stuff. Anyway, I'm off at the studio today from 8 to noon. I'll be back here around noonish. Somewhere in your sleeping quarters is your outfit for the day. It took me all day yesterday to think. So don't mock me, because you're really gonna need them to blend in. I would suggest not wearing the same thing more than once, because that's how people recognize if someone is stalking them. Accessorize like there's no tomorrow. This note stuff feels like a Mission: Impossible plot or something, this note will self-destruct as soon as you put it on the counter! BOOM! I'd mildly suggest staying in and doing code work today. Drink coffee or go back to sleep. Your decision. Room service is unlimited. Order whatever you feel like eating, from over easy eggs to Froot Loops with cheese shredded in it. Whatever. Tonight I will be attending the Third Eye Blind concert next door at the Arlene Schnitzer Concert Hall around 7:30 or so. Meaning: I will be here all day tomorrow. Take in the town like a kid at communion. Good luck, and that is your mission, if you chose to accept it." Frohike read from the note.

> "Oh. My. God. She's perfect!" Langly gasped.
 "I know. She's hot. And you're sleeping with her."

> "It's a king bed, Frohike. It gives more room than your pants! I did not have sexual relations with that woman, Sterling Silver! And I never will!"
 "Oh yeah?"

> "Yeah!"
 "It doesn't matter, she wouldn't betray a promise she made." Byers sighed.

> "What promise?" Frohike and Langly exclaimed at the same time.
 "That she's part of the Gunmen, like a normal Gunman. As a friend, not a girlfriend at all."

> "Makes sense. I'm going back to sleep." Frohike muttered, heading back to the living room and the comforts of the couch.
 "Coffee." Langly summed up in one word as he proceeded to call room service. Byers stood around for a moment, but headed back into his room. Just like Silver's note said, he found a fresh change of clothes hanging the middle of the closet, while the rest of his suits were shoved off to the ends of the closet. Byers fingered the light tan khaki pants, white cotton shirt, and glanced down at the casual gray sneakers. Silver had style. That's what's being the identity expert of the Gunmen is all about.

>
 As Silver came back, exhausted from the recording session all morning, she opened the door to a room of pure laziness. None of the Gunmen were dressed at all, they were just sitting around sipping coffee and checking up on e-mail through their laptops. She muttered and slammed the door, drawing attention of the lazy Gunmen.

> "Why aren't you dressed? I'm not gonna play mother and force clothes on you! I already set out some nice clothes for you to wear! Even a damn wake-up call with a note!" Silver angrily muttered at the Gunmen. She huffed and stomped off to take a nap. The Gunmen exchanged glances and money bets.
 "Should we get dressed and stuff? She seemed really pissed, since she only got a few hours of sleep last night." Langly said in a worrying tone.

> "Hmm, don't want the pretty lady to get furious all up in here. We

owe favors. She went through a lot to get us here." Frohike suggested.
 "Settled." Byers concluded.
 The Gunmen had gotten dressed in their fresh Gap khaki clothes and cleaned up the hotel room. Silver was deep in sleep as soon as she hit the pillow. Langly was kind enough to be quiet as he moved around the room.

> "You need some major sun time, Lang." Silver mumbled sleepily as she was awake slightly as Langly pulled on his plain T-shirt. He was facing the window, back to Silver, looking fazed at the traffic several floors below.
 "Quit peeking at me, I feel violated." Langly whispered.

> "Oopsy doopsy. My bad." Silver returned to sleep. Langly sighed and picked up the fresh out of the box sneakers and headed out of the room, quietly shutting the door behind him.
 "Screw housekeeping." Frohike was heard grumbling in the living room, cleaning up his sleeping area. Langly turned around and looked at Byers staring out the window.

> "You ok? Did those guys in the foofy hats at the front door scare ya?" Langly laughed, looking at Byers, then glancing at what Byers was staring at.
 "Nah, just thinking." Byers said, breaking his gaze out the window and continued off into his room.

>
 It was well off into the mid-5PM times when Silver got out of bed, took a shower, and changed into a change of clean clothes. The Gunmen had cleaned the hotel room to a glimmer like housekeeping, but without the nagging tips. Langly cleaned Silver's and his room as she was in the shower. The Gunmen had resumed to sipping coffee while checking up on e-mail. Silver chuckled as she walked by the Gunmen fresh from the shower, clad in a large bathrobe with her short bob hair slicked and dripping. Approving grunts were exchanged among the Gunmen.

>
 A click of the tongue and the hotel door flung open, a walk in the park blocks was planned. Each of the Gunmen was dressed in different clothes, but a slight theme for breezy summer days remained. Silver had forced Langly to wear lightweight frames instead of his geek-chic black frames. Frohike sported a more slimming frame than the old man ones he normally wore. Silver was grinning, she felt good to be back home on a beautiful day like this.

> They arrived at the South Park Blocks and sat around on different benches, basking in the sun and doing some people watching. Silver walked around the parks, watching people go into the art museum, drive by in their tragically hip urban cars, homeless people digging in the garbage cans, kids running around chasing birds off, cute couples quietly chattering away about Starbucks and Blazers playoffs. Silver plopped down next to Langly, who was adjusting the newly unfamiliar frames.
 "Quit fidgeting with the glasses. I know they're different, but they look much better on you than those geek frames." Silver said, reaching up to adjust Langly's glasses straight.

> "Don't make fun of the glasses." Langly slightly threatened, looking off to a different direction, avoiding Silver's gaze.
 "A mistake, I presume," Silver looked behind Langly and spotted a familiar face. "Oh, crap."

> "What?" Langly started to turn around and see what Silver was staring at, but she stopped him by cradling Langly's face in her hands.
 "Susanne alert. Kiss me and play it off so she wouldn't recognize you."

> "W-what?" Langly sputtered.
 "You heard what I said, now play along." Silver tilted her head to the left and waited for Langly, Susanne was getting closer. Langly followed directions and drew closer to Silver, planting his lips on hers. One of Silver's hands

snaked to the back of Langly's head, entangling fingers in his hair. The other one cupped his neck. Langly had no idea where to put his hands, but as if Silver's power directed him, his hands cradled her face, holding back her freshly washed hair. Silver's lips parted, soft breath escaped into Langly's mouth. Her fingernails were slightly digging into his neck. Susanne breezed by, smiling. She just thought they were just another happy couple sharing a moment on a park bench. As soon as the coast was clear, Langly broke away and gasped for breath. He stared off into traffic, dumbfounded by the events that just unfolded.

> "What the hell was that?!" Frohike yelled, as he ran up to Silver. Byers was close behind, but watching Susanne.
 "Acting into the environment. Susanne was just walking by you know, she could have easily recognized Langly. I had to think fast, something to mask Langly's face from her." Silver said, playing it off like it was nothing.

> "Did you plan this?"
 "No. I didn't expect her to show up."

> "She probably came to feed the birds." Byers said, distracted, looking back at Susanne countless times.
 "That is total shit, Silver. What about your promise? Langly's thoughts are haywire right now, brewing up a fanasty of the two of you going at it in the art museum's bathroom stall!" Frohike spat in Silver's face.

> "I never betrayed that promise! There was no sexual relations going on! Get that though your thick porno skull, Frohike." Silver spat back at Frohike.
 "Shut up! It doesn't matter! Susanne didn't recognize me! Silver is the identity expert, she calls the shots." Langly broke in, shouting at Frohike. In confusion and bewilderment, Frohike stepped back.

> "She's still beautiful." Byers whispered, still looking in the direction Susanne went.
 "Yep. Let's head back to the hotel and take a break from each other for awhile." Silver suggested, as she got up and started to walk back.

>
 As they arrived back to the room, they scattered away from each other. They didn't speak at all, worried that another deep heated spat would start up again. It seems angry spats seemed to end in dangerous silence, secretly destroying the Gunmen. They at least blow it off or get it resolved. It seemed just a simple bitter jealousy fight, but it was deeper.

>
 Silver lingered in her dark room, the blinds drawn. The sun still filtered through, dropping soft shadows around the room. She sighed contently as she walked around the room, her bare feet padding quietly on the plush carpet. She paused in front of the window as she heard the door open and shut. There was complete silence.

> Byers stood at the door, hand still on the handle. He was watching the outline of Silver's slender frame in front of the window; her back was to him. Her hands were gripping the ends of the drawn curtains, he wouldn't know if she would turn around or not.
 "What is it?" Silver's voice was low and whispery.

> "I believe you." Byers murmured.
 "Thanks."

> "Frohike gets bent out of shape sometimes. It's not your fault." Byers walked towards Silver and put a hand lightly on her shoulder, if not to startle her.
 "Hmm. I guess I have much to learn about you guys, still."

> "It'll take time."
 "Just like James Bond said; We've got all the time in the world."

> "Yes. Her Majesty's Secret Service. George Lazenby was good in that."
 "That was the only Bond movie he was Bond in."

> "But Sean Connery is the best Bond."
 "I agree. Roger Moore was total crap." Silver laughed softly. Byers smiled.

> "What's on the agenda for tomorrow?"
 "Sleep in. Out on the town

all day. If you want, reunion with your Susanne."

> "Please. I want to hold her in my arms again."
 "Don't let her kiss you. Because the last two times she did, she disappeared. You don't want that to happen again."

> "You're right."
 "Pick the right moment. It'll come."

> "I will."
 "How's Frohike faring?"

> "Better, I think. Raiding the mini-bar as we speak, slamming back small bottles of Vodka quickly. He'll be a little drunk, but he'll get over the park event."
 "Good. I'll set out some aspirin for him in the morning."

> "He doesn't like to admit he has a hangover. Aspirin and strong coffee will do. Let him know you still care."
 "She left me roses by the stairs, surprises let me know she caresâ€|â€|."

> "Blink 182's All The Small Things?"
 "Yep. Your music knowledge is building, young grasshopper."

> "I learned from you, always talking about random things."
 "I thought none of you were paying attention to what I said."

> "Surprise, surprise. I do. You say interesting things that grab my attention. I've listened to Frohike and Langly ramble on and on about the same old things. You provided more fascinating things to listen to."
 "Thanks," Silver let go of the curtains and turned around to face Byers. She hugged him, resting her head on shoulder. Byers' arms hung limp, but moved up to hug back. "You always know the right thing to say."

>
 By Thursday morning, everything was resolved. The relationships between the Gunmen and Silver were restored. Silver had been out late last night at the Third Eye Blind concert next door like she said in Wednesday morning's note. She woke up early to lie out clothing for the Gunmen and aspirin for Frohike. She slept the most of the Gunmen, racked with early and late hours awake. Sleep cycles were thrown out of whack. It was twoish when they all finally left the quiet comforts of the hotel room.

>
 Outfits ranged between the friends, sunglasses, shorts, loose Hawaiian shirts, surfing t-shirts, flowing summer skirt, unbuttoned dress shirt. They taxied around Portland, walking around friendly neighborhoods, Mt. Tabor, Burnside, Belmont, Powell, West-Moreland, and getting off at Portland State University. They had coffee at Anne's' Coffee Company just NE of the campus.

> "Susanne's apartments are just about two blocks away from the hotel. It explains her walk in the park yesterday." Silver said, holding up her cup of coffee, gesturing towards the South Park Blocks.
 "Whoa. Did you plan that too?" Frohike snorted.

> "Maybe. I didn't want to tell you first, because Byers would make a run for it."
 "Logical. I would have, if I knew the street address." Byers laughed.

> "And the apartment number. You'd look like an ass knocking on all the doors asking for Holly Fizergald." Langly added with a hearty laugh. Silver snickered.
 "Hilarious thought of Byers knocking on the doors." Silver laughed.

> "Yeah, ha-ha." Byers laughed flatly. Silver checked her watch.
 "Oop. It's almost 5, time for Susanne to come home." Silver noted, getting up and finishing up her coffee.

> "It's about damn time!" Frohike shouted for the sake of Byers, and finished off his coffee also. The Gunmen trashed their tall cardboard-like cups of coffee and followed after Silver on the walk to Rose Friend Apartments, hoping to beat Susanne home.

> They arrived just a few minutes before. Byers stood around near the gate to the courtyard main entrance, looking around for Susanne. Silver and the remaining Gunmen sat on the steps to the main door further in the courtyard. Silver knew secretly that Susanne would

show up around 5:17PM, like she always does after work. Susanne wouldn't recognize Byers from afar; he was disguised in a backwards-facing green University of Oregon baseball cap, dark wraparound sunglasses, a white tank top underneath a light blue unbuttoned dress shirt, flood pants, white Adidas shoes with sky blue stripes, and hidden short sweatsocks.

> Like clockwork, Susanne appeared from around the corner of SW Jefferson and approached the white archway Byers stood to the left of. Byers was looking in the opposite direction, but he turned around to see Susanne halfway to where he was. She was busy scrambling through her purse, looking for her keys. She stumbled in front of Byers and dropped the contents of her purse onto the sidewalk at Byers' feet. Byers crouched down to help her.
 "Oh. I'm so sorry. I get pretty clumsy sometimes." Susanne apologized, as she crammed objects quickly into her purse.

> "It's no problem. It happens to everyone." Byers assured, scooping up objects and handing them to her. She stopped abruptly and looked up at his face.
 "Byers?"

> "Hmm?"
 "Is that really you?" Susanne looked around her and spotted Langly and Frohike sitting with Silver.

> "It is."
 "Oh my god."

> "You ok?"
 "Yeah. I didn't expect to see you here after leaving you in Las Vegas. I've missed you." Susanne sobbed and stood back up, rubbing her eyes. Byers stood up also and opened his arms out to her, welcoming her. She looked into his glistening blue eyes and walked into his arms, wrapping hers around his waist and settling her head on his chest and cried into his rain fresh Bounce scented dress shirt. He wrapped his arms around her delicate body and stroked her hair.

>
 "This makes me cry. It's like the sappy ending of romance movies when the guy meets the girl again after not seeing her for so long." Silver sniffled happily.

> "Yep. I guess the mission wasn't so impossible like Tom Cruise said." Frohike added, putting his arm around Silver for comfort.

> "You came here looking for me?" Susanne sniffled, looking up at Byers.
 "Yes. With the help of Sterling Silver, the newest member of the Lone Gunmen." Byers said, pointing at Silver brushing back tears under her rose tinted sunglasses. He tucked a wisp of Susanne's hair behind her ear and cupped her moist cheek. Remembering Silver's advice from yesterday: 'pick the right moment. It'll come,' He moved in and kissed Susanne soft and sweetly. That was the cue for Silver, Langly, and Frohike to head back to the hotel. The three slipped away as Byers was still kissing Susanne.

>
 "And happily ever afterâ€|â€|" Frohike trailed off on the short walk back to the hotel.

> "Yep. We'll let Byers come back when he wants to come back. Have to let him catch up with his lady love." Silver added, brushing back her windswept hair.
 "It's sad that its Byers' turn to leave instead of Susanne's." Langly added, calculating past encounters of Byers and Susanne.

> "Unh. He said that by kissing her first. Whoever kisses the other first, will leave. It's just sad."

> It was well off into the early morning on Friday, when Byers stumbled into the room, awakening Frohike.
 "Whoa man. Stayed the night at Mata Hari's abode?" Frohike asked with a hint of I-know-what-you-did-last-night-with-Susanne tone in his voice. Byers ignored Frohike and stumbled off to his room. He entered his room and flung his dress shirt on the floor and plopped on his bed. He sighed happily and fell backwards onto his bed and dozed off.

>
 Silver stirred in her sleep. She heard stumbling footsteps outside the door. She shook Langly softly.
> "Our Byers is home." Silver giggled into Langly's ear.
 "Well, well, well. He finally got some." Langly chuckled.
>
 Silver didn't lie out any outfits for the Gunmen that morning since they already encountered Susanne. But she still arranged a wake-up call late into the day for Byers. The small cell phone Silver snuck into the night table's drawer in Byers' room started to ring around noon, startling Byers awake. He dug around the room before finding the cell phone and answering it.
> "Hello?" Byers said into the cell phone upon answering it.
 "Good early afternoon, Byers. How did you sleep?" Silver's voice asked on the other line.
> "Fine. What time is it?"
 "It's noon. You came stumbling back around 4AM."
> "Ohh. I lost track of time."
 "Cause you were getting nookie."

> "Yeah, and that too."
 "I'll be back in a few minutes, you can wear your own clothes today."
> "Alright, see you soon." Byers clicked off the cell phone and put it back in the drawer. He proceeded to the closet to put on one of his traditional suits.

>Silver came back to the hotel as indicated in her wake-up chat with Byers. She sat around with the Gunmen checking e-mail and discussing a variety of topics before they headed out into the South Park Blocks once again. Byers walked several steps ahead of them on the way. He crossed the last street as Silver tried to separate Frohike and Langly bickering about whomever read the newspaper last. He felt dÃ©jÃ vu kicking in. He heard a roar of an engine and turned around quickly, facing it. It was the Lexus in his dream. Everything seemed to fade away and focused on that Lexus.
 Silver looked up and screamed, she saw Byers turning around sharply, the Lexus' bumper making contact with his shins, his body sailing through the air like a rag doll, smashing into the windshield, rolling over the top of the Lexus before crashing to the pavement below. Langly and Frohike stopped bickering and saw Byers land with a sickening thud to the worn street. Langly turned his head to catch the license plate on the Lexus, and it said PDX DA, just like Byers explained in his dream. The both ran after Silver and crouched to the pavement near Byers as the Lexus sped off.
> "Don't die, Byers. Don't die." Silver sobbed, touching Byers' light brown jacket sleeve.
 "GetÃ©. SusanneÃ©. ForÃ©.. MeÃ©" Byers gasped his last breath before rendering unconscious. Silver wailed and covered her eyes with her hands.
>
To be continuedÃ©Ã©Ã©
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